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## CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR THE TRANSFER OF THE SUDETEN GERMANS

Czechoslovak government plans for the transfer of the Sudeten Germans

Description

An analysis of the German minority problem in Czechoslovakia in the light of the transfer plan proposed by the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile.

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ing those members of the minority who would suffer innocently. Issue is also taken with the plan for its internal inconsistency, and the government's right to make such binding decisions is questioned.

5. The government defends its plan by stating that no solution would satisfy the basic premises on which the new Czechoslovak state will be built, i.e., re-establishment of the pre-Munich frontiers, and the creation of an ethnically homogeneous state consisting of three Slav nationalities: Czechs, Slovaks, and Carpatho-Ukrainians. Although the government acknowledges the seriousness of the economic situation that will be created by the transfer of a large number of skilled industrial workers, it asserts that the state would rather suffer a temporary economic crisis than see its political security jeopardized.

6. Czechoslovak officials are said to be backing the plan unanimously, but they seem to entertain some doubts as to its acceptability to the Allies and its practicability. Some have expressed the belief that many Germans will depart voluntarily before the cessation of hostilities, and that the problem will thus to a large extent solve itself. German groups abroad in general react unfavorably. A group of Social Democrats led by Wenzel Jaksch vigorously opposes the plan and claims recognition for the Sudeten Germans as a sovereign nationality in the Czechoslovak state, enjoying the same rights to self-determination as the Slovaks and Carpatho-Ukrainians. Another group, comprising German Social Democrats and Communists, outwardly supports the plan, but there are factions within this group that oppose it. The opponents of the plan have prepared a memorandum analyzing it's economic aspects and claiming, on the basis of statistics, that the German population of Czechoslovakia is essential to the country's economic prosperity and survival.

7. The appendices include a partial text of the government's plan, the full text of the proposed decree on citizenship, and a statement containing a number of counter-arguments to the plan prepared by a German Social Democratic economist.

## SUMMARY

1. The solution of the minority problem in Czechoslovakia will be an urgent task after the war. Foremost attention is centered upon the German minority, which is the largest numerically and the most important, politically as well as economically. The Czechoslovak Government-in-exile plans to solve the problem through a combination of transfer and denationalization. The government believes that legal expulsion of the majority of the Germans is the only acceptable solution in view of the historic conflict between the Czechs and the Germans and of the potential menace that the Germans constitute to the security of the state.

2. According to the government's proposal all Germans who committed crimes against the Czechoslovak state will be forcibly evicted. Those Germans who are otherwise eligible for Czechoslovak citizenship but do not want to forego their minority rights will be gradually transferred. The number of persons eventually to be expelled is estimated at about 1,600,000 to 2,000,000. The remaining 800,000 to 1,000,000 Germans will be dispersed among the Czech people. They will be deprived of representation as a group and of language and cultural privileges, but individually they will have the full rights of citizens.

3. For the implementation of its plan the government has drafted a citizenship decree, which deprives of Czechoslovak citizenship all German nationals who have become citizens of an enemy state or members of a "national group." The decree establishes the criteria for readmission to Czechoslovak citizenship. It bars all persons who have in any way actively co-operated with the enemy and is so formulated that it gives the government a free hand in the determination of the eligibility of every individual.

4. The Czechoslovak proposal has been criticized on the basis of (1) the international political implications involved in the transfer of such a large number of Germans who would be predisposed to become members of a Nazi underground, (2) its undesirable economic and possibly cultural effects on the Czechoslovak state, and (3) ethical considerations involv-

treatment of the other national minorities.[1]

## A. The Historical Basis of the Czech-German Conflict

Although German colonists appeared in Bohemia and Moravia as early as the eleventh century they never became integrated with the native population. Despite frequent intermarriages the Germans and the Czechs alike retained distinct national characteristics. From the beginning relations between the two peoples were marked by a fierce and unrelenting conflict. The Czechs regarded the Germans as intruders and oppressors and saw in them the vanguard of pan-German tendencies and, as such, the political and national enemies of the Slavic nations. The Germans, on the other hand, regarded the Czechs as culturally inferior and thought of them in terms of a slave nation. Nevertheless they feared the Czechs because of their numerical superiority, a feeling which increased the pan-German tendencies among themselves.

After the sixteenth century Bohemia and Moravia were ruled by Hapsburg kinds, who enhanced the position of the German element. Gradually the German language reached an equal position with the Czech and finally came to replace it as the language of instruction and of official business in the government and the courts. The numerically inferior Germans eventually came to hold political and economic powers far superior to the Czechs.

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[1] The German inhabitants do not occupy a compact territory that may be considered as a geographic unit. The overwhelming majority live in the border districts of Bohemia and Moravia, the so-called Sudetenland, from which the familiar designation Sudeten German is derived. However, the Germans do not constitute a majority throughout the entire territory. In some districts the Germans predominate and form 80 to 90 percent of the population, in others the Czech element forms about 25 to 50 percent. In addition to the border districts about 200,000 Germans are scattered in the interior and form language islands around the major cities. About 160,000 live in Slovakia. Due to the geographic distribution of Germans throughout Czechoslovakia, many regard the problem of the Sudeten Germans as separate from the problem presented by the Germans elsewhere in the country. The Czechoslovak Government in its plan does not make any distinction on the basis of geographic location, but it should be understood that the plan primarily concerns the Sudeten Germans.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The solution of the minority problem will be one of the urgent tasks facing the Czechoslovak Government after the war. Before 1938 national minorities constituted 26 percent of the population in Czechoslovakia.[1] They were the cause of much internal strife; they disrupted the unity of the Republic, and were among the main factors that contributed to the downfall of the state. To prevent a similar development after this war a radical solution of the minority problem will be necessary. To this end, the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile has submitted to the European Advisory Commission a plan in which it proposes a combination of transfer and denationalization of the national minorities in Czechoslovakia. To provide a legal basis for the implementation of this proposal a citizenship decree has been drafted by the government.

Although the over-all plan is applicable to all national minorities in Czechoslovakia and is basically aimed at removing all of them, foremost consideration is given to the German element. This emphasis results from the fact that from an internal point of view the Germans constitute the most acute problem. They are the largest minority group, and politically as well as economically the most influential. The treatment accorded to them, moreover, will have far greater international implications than the

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[1] On the basis of the 1930 census the population of Czechoslovakia according to nationalities was:

| | |
|---|---|
| Czechs and Slovaks (2,700,000 Slovaks) | 9,688,000 |
| Carpatho-Ukrainians | 549,000 |
| Germans | 3,231,000 |
| Hungarians | 692,000 |
| Jews | 182,000 |
| Poles | 81,000 |
| Miscellaneous | 49,000 |

During subsequent years the activist policy gained adherents,[1] and in 1925 the Christian Social and German Agrarian Parties joined the government coalition. The German Socialists followed suit in 1929. But this favorable development was abruptly terminated when Hitler came to power in Germany. Although the DNSAP dissolved itself voluntarily in 1933 in order to forestall its contemplated dissolution by the government, its political aims survived and were perpetuated by the newly-created *Sudetendeutsche Heimatsfront* led by Konrad Henlein.

Pretending only to seek autonomy within the Czechoslovak state, Henlein and his collaborators, with the consent and support of the Nazi Party, embarked on the political campaign which in 1938 resulted in the separation from Czechoslovakia of the German-inhabited border districts, the so-called *Sudetengebiet*. To all outward appearances Henlein had the support of the majority of the German population.[2] Before the national elections in 1935 the *Sudetendeutsche Heimatsfront* became a political party under the name of *Sudetendeutsche Partei* (SdP). It polled 1,200,000 votes (60 percent of the German vote). In securing popular support, skilful propaganda and psychological pressure certainly had a great share. Furthermore, the bad economic conditions in the German-inhabited industrial areas drove many Germans into Henlein's camp. Although it is impossible to determine how many outward supporters of Henlein could be

---

[1] In 1925 the strength of the German parties, as shown by the number of seats held in the national legislature, was as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| German Social Democrats | 17 | representatives |
| Agrarians | 24 | " |
| Christian Social | 13 | " |
| Nationalists | 10 | " |
| National Socialists | 7 | " |

German Communists did not have a separate party but were part of the Czechoslovak Communist Party; they had 8 representatives.

[2] In 1935 the strength of the German parties was as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sudeten German (Henlein) Party | 44 | representatives |
| Social Democrats | 11 | " |
| Agrarians | 5 | " |
| Christian Socials | 6 | " |
| Communists | 5 | " |

In the spring of 1938 the Agrarian and Christian Social parties affiliated themselves with the Sudeten German Party, so that at the municipal elections in that year it obtained 92 percent of the total German vote.

This relation was reversed in 1918 when the Czechoslovak Republic was created. The Czechoslovak government undertook to guarantee the minority rights of the German nationals living on its territory, but the Germans objected to Czechoslovak supremacy over the predominantly German-inhabited districts. Their immediate reaction to the new conditions was the creation of the German National Socialist Workers' Party (DNSAP), which in both aim and ideology foreshadowed the Nazi Party in Germany. Later the German National Socialist leader in Czechoslovakia maintained close contact with Hitler and his associates.

Between 1919 and 1922, Czech-German relations were marked by a complete refusal on the part of Germans to cooperate with the state authorities. But beginning in 1922 nationalist agitations were largely replaced by a policy seeking social and economic rather than national equality in the state. This change was due in part to the structure of the Weimar Republic, which could or would not support any irredentist claims.

The beginnings of a more cooperative policy toward the state were heralded in 1922 by a split in the "German federation," the association that heretofore contained all German parties except the Socialist and had been the center of resistance toward the government. The German Agrarian and Christian Social Parties now formed a working front advocating cooperation with the government. But a considerable part of the Germans remained faithful to the Nationalist and National Socialist Parties representing pan-German ideology. In the development of these divergent attitudes the social status of the German population seems to have been one of the determining factors. The workers and some members of the petty bourgeoisie were willing to abandon their national identity for the sake of social equality. The majority of the middle class, especially teachers, former bureaucrats, and holders of large industrial and agricultural properties remained as a rule faithful to the nationalist idea.

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## II. THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL FOR THE SOLUTION OF THE GERMAN PROBLEM

In the light of the facts outlined above, it is clear that a permanent solution of the German problem must be found if the future Czechoslovak state is to enjoy any internal stability. The possibility of returning to the pre-1938 status under which the Germans enjoyed minority rights has been ruled out by the Czechoslovak Government. "Whatever the underlying causes may have been," a government spokesman asserts, "the system [of minority guarantee] failed....It was often misused to serve as disguise for the perpetuation of imperialistic and nationalist aims [by the Germans]." The Czechoslovak Government believes that the Czech and Slovak people would vigorously oppose any attempt to return to conditions under which the German national group would enjoy special privileges such as would be provided for by a minority treaty.

According to the Czechoslovak Government, the new solution of the German problem must be radical. It must be designed to prevent the German minority from again becoming the tool of pan-German agitation. The Germans in Czechoslovakia, it is stated, must never again have the opportunity to disrupt the unity of the state and thereby constitute a menace to its security. Furthermore, a basis must be found for peaceful relations between those Germans who remain in Czechoslovakia after the war and the Czech and Slovak people.

In the view of the Czechoslovak Government, the aims mentioned above can be achieved only through the legal expulsion of all Germans who are in sympathy with "Henleinism, Nazism, and pan-German ideas in general." Only after the expulsion of this element, the government holds, will it be possible to find a basis for peaceful cooperation between democratic Germans and the Slav elements in Czechoslovakia. The number of persons in this undesirable category is estimated by the government at about 1,600,000 to 2,000,000, or about 55 to 60 percent of all Germans in Czechoslovakia.

considered as active Nazis and really wanted the separation of the German-inhabited districts from the Czechoslovak state, the fact that they supported Henlein's party identified them with Nazism.

## B. The Position of the Germans after 1938

The German-inhabited border districts were separated from Czechoslovakia by the Munich agreement in September 1938. In March 1939, a further division of Czechoslovak territory took place. The remaining parts of Bohemia and Moravia were occupied by German troops and became the Protectorate, thus marking the end of the Republic. Slovakia became an independent country under German protection. The Germans once again became the ruling element on Czechoslovak territory, this time spreading out even over Slovakia, which had previously never been under German control.

In the Sudetengebiet the population joined the German Nazi Party (NSDAP) in large numbers. Many received employment in the public service, and derived other benefits from the downfall of the Czechoslovak Republic.[1] Although it is now said that a large number of people have been disappointed in their hopes and consequently are growing increasingly critical of the Nazi regime, there have been no outward manifestations of opposition in these districts. In the Protectorate the Germans became Reich citizens, and received special privileges as members of the "ruling caste." In Slovakia a similar development took place. The Germans there, who had never been conscious of their nationality, were organized in a "national group" (Volksgruppe) and enjoyed the special protection of the Third Reich and all the benefits derived from it.

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[1] The number of persons who joined the NSDAP in the Sudetengebiet is said to be 700,000. An estimated 400,000 to 500,000 have served in the German Army. The number of Germans who were employed in the various public services is estimated at 300,000.

(1) If they prefer, however, to maintain their national character they will have to emigrate, but the conditions for their emigration will be moderated. They will be allowed to stay in the country for a number of years until economic conditions in the country of immigration become settled. During their stay in Czechoslovakia they will be allowed to pursue their professions and will enjoy certain language privileges in dealing with the state authorities. Lower schools will be made available for their children. Special consideration will be granted to older persons (born before 1895) who cannot reasonably be expected to learn the Czech language and are not likely to have children. They will be allowed to live out the rest of their natural lives in Czechoslovakia.

(2) Those Germans who are eligible for Czechoslovak citizenship and are willing to give up their national character and become loyal citizens of the state will be allowed to stay in Czechoslovakia. Their communities will be broken up and they will be dispersed among Czech-speaking people. They and their children will be denied language and cultural privileges, and will be prevented from forming an autonomous political body. They will, however, enjoy the full rights of citizenship as individuals.

3. Those German citizens who have actively contributed to the liberation of the Czechoslovak Republic will automatically retain their citizenship. Whether or not they too will have to forego all claims to minotiry rights has not been decided yet.

B. Objections to the Czechoslovak Plan

The government's plan is objected to on several grounds.

1. It is objected to from the point of view of the international political implications involved in the transfer to Germany of such a large number of Germans who are potential material for a Nazi underground.

2. Objection is raised on the ground of ethical considerations involving those members of the minority who would suffer innocently.

After the expulsion of the potentially dangerous Germans, the government believes that about 800,000 to 1,000,000 will remain. The basic prerequisite for their staying will be that they forego all claims to minority rights and show their willingness to become loyal citizens of the state.

A. Methods of Transfer and Denationalization

According to the plan for the transfer and denationalization of the Germans in Czechoslovakia submitted by the government-in-exile to the European Advisory Commission[1] due effort will be made to avoid inflicting hardships so far as possible. Several groups of transferees will be distinguished:

1. Persons of German nationality who were not Czechoslovak citizens before 29 September 1938. Among these are included all Reich German officials on Czechoslovak territory, new settlers, and evacuees. They will be forcibly evicted from Czechoslovakia.

2. Persons who were Czechoslovak citizens of German nationality and who, after 29 September 1938, were recognized as citizens of an enemy state or became members of a "national group" (i.e. Germans in Slovakia). All of these persons will be deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship. Subsequently every case will be examined on its individual merits and accordingly several categories will be distinguished.

(a) Those who committed crimes against the Czechoslovak state will be banished. They will be treated in a similar way to persons in group 1. The crimes in question are defined in the Citizenship Decree which has been drafted by the government to provide the legal basis for implementation of the transfer plan.[2]

(b) Those who committed no crimes against the Czechoslovak Republic are in principle eligible for Czechoslovak citizenship.

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[1] For text of the Czechoslovak proposal, see Appendix I.
[2] For full text of the preliminary draft of the Czechoslovak citizenship decree see Appendix II.

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2. Objection is raised on the ground of ethical considerations involving those members of the minority who would suffer innocently.

3. It is objected to on the basis of the undesirable economic and possibly cultural effects that Czechoslovakia would suffer from the loss of a considerable number of its industrial workers.

4. The internal inconsistency of the plan itself also gives rise to objections. According to the plan the Germans who would stay in the country, at least temporarily, fall into three categories. Actually those persons who are eventually to emigrate would fare better than those who can stay permanently. The former group would for the period of their stay enjoy, for example, certain language privileges, while the latter would be deprived of such advantages. Furthermore, if the Germans who helped actively in the liberation of the Czechoslovak state obtain minority rights, the majority of the Germans who are subject to denationalization would certainly object and become easy targets for nationalist agitation.

5. The plan is objected to as an arbitrary decision of the government-in-exile, which, it is claimed, does not possess the authority to make final decisions affecting the entire country without consulting the population at home.

C. The Government's Defense of the Transfer Plan

The Czechoslovak Government is aware of the vulnerability of its plan, but defends it as the only solution which is acceptable to the government itself and which, although not ideal, would satisfy all parties concerned to the fullest possible extent. For several reasons the government rejects all alternative solutions of the minority problems --territorial change, federalization, or denationalization--as unacceptable or impracticable.

1. Territorial change. It has been suggested that transferring the population together with the territory on which it lives would be a satisfactory solution. This is dismissed by the government on the following grounds:

a. It would essentially reaffirm the validity of the Munich agreement, which is repudiated by the Czechoslovak government.

b. It would for the first time break up the territorial and economic unity of Czechoslovakia's historic provinces. Even the Nazis, who forcibly separated the Sudetengebiet from the rest of Bohemia and Moravia, had to admit that the German-inhabited territory did not form a compact geographic unit capable of self-administration. To solve the problem they divided it into several smaller units. Furthermore, the government claims, the economic indivisibility of the historic provinces was admitted even by the Nazis.

c. In addition to creating an unnatural state of affairs, territorial change would strengthen Germany both strategically and economically. Such a step, the government holds, would hardly be in accord with the aims of the Allies.

2. Federalization. Some persons, among them Wenzel Jaksch, Sudeten German Social Democratic leader in exile, have suggested that a logical solution of the problem would be the recognition of the Germans in Czechsolovakia as a sovereign nationality. Under these circumstances they would enjoy the same rights to self-determination as the Slovaks and Carpatho-Ukrainians.

This proposal is rejected on the grounds that the Germans in Czechoslovakia do not form a closed community, based on the historical development of a unity of language, territory, economic life, and cultural concepts, and thus cannot be considered as a nation with right to self-determination. Furthermore, the concept of a federal state including Germans as equal partners is unacceptable to the Czechoslovak Government, because it contradicts the principle of national (Slav) homogeneity on which the new state will be based.[1] It conflicts with the concept of the administrative and economic unity of Bohemia and Moravia.

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[1] In the view of the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile the future Czechoslovak state will be (1) restored within its pre-Munich frontiers; (2) a national state of Czechs, Slovaks, and Carpatho-Ukrainians; (3) a people's democracy; (4) a bulwark against the renewal of a German "Drang nach Osten."

Moreover, the government holds that if a large number of Germans were left within the natural frontiers of the Czechoslovak state the danger of the revival of pan-German threats would remain.

3. Denationalization. The solution of the problem through denationalization alone is considered by the Czechoslovak Government as impractical and, indeed, impossible. Forcible denationalization, says the government, would take too long a time. It would inevitably bring about new conflicts with Germany, for it would become the instrument of new nationalist agitations which could lead to international conflicts and intervention. Voluntary denationalization, re-education, and assimilation could also not be accomplished in less than one or two generations. Furthermore, it would require "a sincere decision by the adult members of the minority to sacrifice the political content of Germanism...and accept the political ...ideals of the state nation." In view of previous experience, the government holds that this decision could be expected only from a small part of the minority.

In defense of the transfer plan the government states that it will be carried out with the idea of avoiding as much unnecessary hardship as possible. The government further points out that provision is made to distinguish between guilty and innocent so far as that can be done. But the government takes the view that the convenience and immunity of innocent Germans must be secondary to the interests of the Czechoslovak nation.

The objections raised on the ground of the undesirable economic effects of the transfer of such a large number of people are considered more serious. But the government claims that the state would rather suffer the minor evil of temporary economic disadvantages than face a renewal of the nationality strife. Furthermore, it believes that the greater number of those who are eligible for Czechoslovak citizenship and will remain in the country either permanently or at least temporarily will come from among the working classes. In this manner it believes that the labor supply of the country will not be drained at a moment when vital industries will need it.

## III. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TRANSFER PLAN

### A. The Attitude of Czechoslovak Officials

From an interview with Jaroslav Stransky,[1] Czechoslovak Minister of Justice, it becomes evident that not all of the members of the government view the transfer plan with equal enthusiasm. Stransky himself was the last one to accept it, although he is now convinced that it is the only possible solution. He is, however, still apprehensive of the enormous technical difficulties involved in carrying out the actual transfer. He also points out that the Allies, while "now supporting the plan in principle, may not be willing to accept it in practice after the armistice.... It is not at all unlikely," he says, "that they [the Allies] may refuse to receive two million Germans from the Sudetenland, not only because of the practical problems involved (food, transport, housing, etc.) but also because these particular Germans will be predestined to join the Nazi underground." Stransky further asserts that "even if the Allies do not refuse, other purely practical obstacles -- the chaotic physical conditions to be expected in Germany after the armistice -- may delay transfer operations so that they may eventually never be integrally completed."

Rudolf Bechyne, former Minister of Transportation and now a member of the State Council, despite his frequent opposition to the government supports the transfer plan fully.[2] Bechyne, who admits that he was never anti-German, believes that dispersal of the Germans is necessary. He thinks, however, that the Germans will be allowed to have lower schools, and that after a number of years they will have the chance to form their own group within the Social Democratic and Communist Parties.

The attitude of the Czechoslovak Communists is not yet clear. Previously it was reported that some disagreement existed between the Communists and the government over the number of guilty persons to be expelled. A statement by Klement Gottwald, Communist leader abroad, in-

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1. See BA 126.11 - A Czechoslovak defense of the Sudeten German transfer Plan.
2. OSS Source A, 9 December 1944.

dicated that the Party was inclined to make a lower estimate of the number of people to be transferred than the government. The Communist Party has actually not committed itself to any definite policy with regard to this issue, but it is said that Karl Kreibich, German Communist member of the State Council, is in favor of the plan.

Despite any misgivings that the individual members of the government may have about the acceptability or workability of the plan, outwardly they all support it and push its acceptance.

B. Reactions among Germans Abroad

The reaction of German groups abroad is in general unfavorable. One faction of Germans, led by Wenzel Jaksch, has opposed the government's policy during the entire period of exile. His position on a solution of the problem has been stated above (Section II, C, 2). He and his followers in England and Sweden reject the transfer plan as unjust to the majority of the Germans, and consider it a violation of the provisions of the Atlantic Charter.

Another group of Germans, known under the name of "Representation of Democratic Germans from Czechoslovakia," has supported the Czechoslovak Government and has opposed Jaksch consistently.[1] In fact this group is now recognized by the government as the only representative organ of the German population of Czechoslovakia. The leaders of this group outwardly accept the government's policy. But several members proposed a confidential memorandum, circulated only among a limited number of people and passed on to a few British members of Parliament, in which they sharply criticize the transfer plan.[2]

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1. This group includes three factions: (1) German Communists led by Karl Kreibich; (2) the German Social Democratic Party of Czechoslovakia led by Jozef Zinner, Franz Koehler, and Irene Kirpal; and (3) the German Democratic Freedom party, led by Franz Peres.
2. For full text see Appendix III.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Although the Czechoslovak Government has set forth its principles for a solution of the German problem, and has outlined the methods whereby it intends to implement them, it has not yet worked out a detailed plan for the transfer. It is possible that the present political developments in Czechoslovakia, the contemplated move of the government to Slovak territory, and the ensuing tasks of consolidation thereafter, will delay a final decision on the exact mechanism of the transfer plan. It is not known whether the government has taken into consideration the possible alterations that the plan may undergo when subjected to scrutiny and approval by the representatives of the Czechoslovak people. Nevertheless, it is fairly clear that the government has not entirely lost sight of the possible opposition of the Allies, and has not deluded itself with the belief that a clean sweep can be made of the German problem in one stroke. It may be assumed that despite its official sponsorship and support of the plan the government does not really expect that it could be fully implemented.

There is evidence that the government believes conditions in the Sudetengebiet, before the cessation of hostilities, will be such as to induce many Germans to leave before the arrival of the Czechoslovak authorities. Government spokesmen have expressed the view that the number of war casualties among the Germans from Czechoslovakia is about 250,000, and that these casualties, together with people now in the Army and in administrative posts who are likely to have fled before the cessation of hostilities, will just about fill the estimated figure of 1,600,000-2,000,000 Germans the Government wants to transfer. It is possible that the publicity given to the transfer plan is also designed to induce Germans to leave before the end of hostilities. The voluntary departure of a large number of Germans before the establishment of Czechoslovak authority would relieve the government of a substantial part of its problem, for presumably only the loyal Germans would remain in the country. Furthermore, it would obviate the possibility of conflict with the Allies, who would be presented with a *fait accompli*. Under the conditions prevailing immediately after the war it is very doubtful whether any attempt would be made to return to Czechoslovakia persons who had already left the country.

## APPENDIX I

## PROPOSAL FOR THE SOLUTION OF THE MINORITY PROBLEM IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA (PRELIMINARY MEMORANDUM)

The text of the Czechoslovak proposal is reproduced in part.

Part V. Formulation of the Proposal

I. Czechoslovak citizens of German and Magyar nationality who after 29 September 1938 were declared or recognized by an enemy state as their citizens, and Czechoslovak citizens who were or became after that date members of "National Groups" or bodies politically uniting persons of German or Magyar nationality, will be deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship by law (decree of President of the Republic). With the loss of citizenship goes also the loss of domiciliary rights, and rights to legal protection, holding office or exercising a profession, reserved for Czechoslovak citizens.

II. Czechoslovak citizens of German or Magyar nationality who prove that they have actively participated in the fight against Germany or Hungary, or have otherwise contributed to restoring freedom to the Czechoslovak state, will not lose Czechoslovak citizenship.

III. Persons of German or Magyar nationality who were not Czechoslovak citizens before 29 September 1938 will be forcibly deported to Germany or Hungary, in certain cases after serving sentences for acts committed on Czechoslovak territory. This also applies to persons covered by Art. I, insofar as they participated in the Henlein-Nazi movement or committed acts which will be defined as criminal in a law (decree).

IV. German and Magyar citizens, who have lost Czechoslovak citizenship according to Art. I and who prove that they did not participate in the Henlein-Nazi movement and did not commit any criminal acts against the state as defined in Art. III, can again become Czechoslovak citizens if they request permission to take the oath of Czechoslovak citizenship, which will then be granted (....) years later if they can show that they have undertaken nothing against the integrity of the Czechoslovak state, its state form, or the laws enacted for its protection, that they have placed them in Czech, Slovak or Ruthenian schools, and that they have done everything to ensure that their children will be loyal citizens of the Czechoslovak state.

During the period mentioned above, these people will not be banished from the state territory or deprived of the possibility of exercising their professions, so long as they do not contravene the principles mentioned in this paragraph.

V. Also those who do not desire to take the oath can be permitted to remain on Czechoslovak territory and there exercise their professions up to the time when they will be informed that at the end of a stipulated period their residence is no longer desirable. After (...) years after the conclusion of the armistice (or after the publication of this decree) they will not be deported unless they have participated in anti-state activity or in political acts directed toward changing or abolishing this law, or unless supplemental proof is produced that they participated in the Henlein-Nazi movement or committed other criminal acts as defined in Art. III.

VI. Insofar as it is administratively possible, people affected by the two preceding articles may, in relations with Czechoslovak state offices, use their mother tongue during the period of their residence before emigration or the acquisition of Czechoslovak citizenship. People born before 31 December 1895 can also do so after this period is ended.

Ignorance of the state language disqualifies for public office (civil service). In exceptional cases, a stipulated period may be permitted before giving an examination in the state language.

VII. Insofar as parents, foster-parents or guardians cannot or do not wish to have a request according to Art. IV apply to their children of 10-21 years of age, they can decide to leave it to the children, who must inform state officials of their decision at latest by the end of the year in which they become 18. If they desire to follow their parents in requesting citizenship, the conditions of this request also apply to them.

In cases where the request for citizenship is refused (to the parents), it may exceptionally be permitted that children over 18, educated according to the principles of Art. IV, may be granted Czechoslovak citizenship at their own request. If the children do not request citizenship, then the provisions of Art. IV apply also to them.

VIII. As far as possible, the Czechoslovak state will maintain German and Magyar lower schools for children affected by Arts. V and VII, but no more than (...) years; these schools will of course be directed in the democratic, republican spirit. Such schools will be closed or dissolved if they become instruments of an enemy state.

IX. For any other residence of German and Magyar citizens on Czechoslovak territory the usual provisions for foreigners apply.

X. The Czechoslovak state can apply its laws concerning enemy property, its confiscation and administration, to all German and Magyar citizens.

XI. Insofar as the property rights of persons other than those mentioned in Art. III are affected, they will be treated with moderation and justice, and the confiscated property will be compensated according to the possibilities and legal regulations.

NOTE: The length of the period mentioned in Arts. IV, V, and VIII will depend on economic and other considerations.

## APPENDIX II

## PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, ON (DATE...) CONCERNING THE LOSS OF CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENSHIP

At the proposal of the government and after discussion by the State Council, I Order:

Article 1

1. Germans and Magyars of Czechoslovak nationality, with the exception of those covered by Article 2, lose Czechoslovak citizenship.

2. Persons who derive citizenship from them also lost it.

Article 2.

1. The following do not lose Czechoslovak citizenship.

(a) Germans and Magyars who remained consistently faithful to the Czechoslovak Republic and who participated actively in the fight for its liberation, if they establish their right within six months after the date on which the decree becomes effective; (Note: changed to "within six months after the end of the war")

(b) Non-German and non-Magyar wives of persons covered by Article 1, who establish their right within the same period;

(c) German and Magyar wives of non-German and non-Magyar Czechoslovak citizens insofar as they are not affected by Article 3, Section 2. (Note: A fourth paragraph covers soldiers who served in the Czechoslovak forces abroad).

The cases of those persons who derive citizenship from persons covered by paragraph (a) of this article will be examined separately, if they fall under the provisions of Article 3, Section 2.

Article 3.

1. Persons who have lost Czechoslovak citizenship according to the provisions of Article 1 and who request it within six months after the effective date of this decree can again acquire Czechoslovak citizenship if they have not violated the duties of a Czechoslovak citizen.

2. Persons who have violated these duties and who cannot request the re-acquisition of citizenship are those who:

(a) were or are members of the Legislative body of an enemy state;

(b) were or are judges or appointed officials of an enemy state, or delegated or accredited to another court or public office by an organ of an enemy state;

(c) were or are appointed officials or appointed or elected functionaries or members of a body, organ, or formation of the administration or autonomous administration of an enemy state, or delegated or accredited to another organ of administration or autonomous administration by an enemy state or by the said body, organ, or formation;

(d) taught during the period since 29 September 1938 or are now teaching, or were or are employees of the highest categories, in German or Magyar schools, or in other schools if they were sent there by an enemy state, corporation, institution, institute, or school, or by any of the organizations mentioned below in paragraph (h);

(e) were or are officers or NCO's of enemy armed forces;

(f) were or are serving in any other capacity in enemy armed forces, or fought against the Czechoslovak Republic or its allies in this war, unless they prove that they actively resisted such service or carried out acts of opposition against it;

(g) were or are members of any enemy security service or an enemy armed or militarily organized formation or any such formation, even one independent of an enemy state, which opposed the exercise of (Czechoslovak) state sovereignty and power;

(h) were or are, on Czechoslovak territory or elsewhere, members of a party, movement, political group, association, society or formation about which it is ascertained that they were organized by the enemy or that they worked against the sovereignty of the Czechoslovak Republic or against the renewal of its exercise, against its security, independence, territorial integrity, constitutional unity, or the democratic-republican form of the state, or were or are members of a formation supporting such anti-state activity, or perpetrators, participants or assistants of actions directed to that end;

(i) were or are members of the executive bodies or statutory organs of an enemy institution or enterprise, or accredited to any other institution or enterprise, or delegates of any institution or enterprise, appointed by an enemy state or institution or enterprise or any of the organizations mentioned in the preceding paragraph;

(j) were or are leading persons or statutory organs of a business which supported to a notable degree the enemy war effort, or persons entitled to supervize the functioning of such a business or of its employees;

(k) were or are entrusted with confidential missions in enemy service;

(l) were or are recipients of honorary titles, offices, or decorations granted by an enemy state, an enemy institution or organization; such honorary decorations are considered to include the granting of a letter of Reich citizenship according to the German law on Reich citizenship of 15 September 1935;

(m) are proved to be the authors of public manifestations of sentiments in enmity to the Czechoslovak Republic, including statements made in applications for office;

(n) are liable to sentence for acts punishable under the law on the punishment of Nazi criminals;

(o) before 29 September 1938 went to enemy territory for the purpose of seeking the protection of enemy officials, or went abroad for the purpose of avoiding prosecution for punishable acts which they had committed against the Czechoslovak Republic;

(p) were members of the so-called Sudeten Deutsches Freikorps or of any other similar formation which aimed at armed revolutionary action against the Czechoslovak Republic;

(q) left the territory of the Republic after the effective date of the armistice with the enemy, without the knowledge of the appropriate officials, or, if they left before, do not return, despite official notification, within the prescribed time limit;

(r) in any manner actively cooperated or are cooperating with the enemy;

(s) benefited or sought to benefit economically or financially, for themselves or for persons close to them, from the situation resulting from the occupation of Czechoslovak territory by enemy powers.

Article 4.

1. A person who establishes his right according to Article 2, or requests the re-acquisition of citizenship according to Article 3, Section 1, does so, for himself and for those persons who derive citizenship from him, at the administrative office of first instance at his domicile. His case is decided by the office charged with the administration of his province; in the case of requests according to Article 3 this office decides by free deliberation and with definitive effect.

2. If the present domicile is not in Czechoslovakia, the application goes to the place of the last domicile there; if there is none, then to the appropriate office charged with the administration of the province of Moravia-Silesia.

Article 5.

1. Separate examinations will be made in all cases of the requested re-acquisition of citizenship for minor children older than 14. These minors may also themselves make application according to Article 3, Section 1, or declare that they do not wish to be included in the request of the head of the family.

2. Where wives covered by Article 2, Section 1 (b) establish their right, they can also request the re-acquisition of citizenship for their minor children.

Article 6.

1. All Germans and Magyars who have been Czechoslovak citizens up to the present are obliged to register themselves and the persons who derive citizenship from them.

2. Failure to observe this obligation or incorrect statements

in the registration are punishable by - (fine or imprisonment), unless the action is punishable by a more severe sentence under valid laws.

Article 7.

Details will be established by government decree.

Article 8.

This constitutional law becomes effective as of the date of its publication; the Ministry of the Interior and other appropriate Ministries are charged with its execution.

# APPENDIX III

## A SUDETEN GERMAN CRITIQUE OF THE TRANSFER PLAN[1]

### I. No definite arrangements in exile?

In pushing forward definite plans for the expulsion of German-speaking Czechoslovak citizens from Czechoslovak soil, the Czechoslovak Government violates its often repeated promises of not making any arrangements without the previous and freely expressed consent of the people at home. In his second message to the State Council (25th of November 1941) Dr. Benes declared literally:

> "I proceed...on the self-evident democratic postulate...that ...no one of us has the right to settle anything definitely for the future of our state in fundamental international or internal affairs ...Therefore I have from the beginning refused to affect any fundamental international or internal settlements. Today it is recognized everywhere, and approved in agreements with our people at home, that without the participation of those at home nothing definite can be decided....From the beginning I have insisted on the view that we here cannot make any definite decision or contract any obligation on any fundamental aspect of the affairs of our Germans."

With special emphasis President Benes stressed the principle of not changing anything in matters of citizenship during the war. We quote from his first message to the State Council (11th of December 1940):

> " I emphasize very formally and clearly that we will not abandon (or renounce) any of our citizens, of whatever nationality or party,

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[1] This statement was prepared by Dr. Brügel, a Sudeten German Social Democrat now working at the Ministry of Reconstruction. He was one of the leaders of the opposition to Jaksch, and has always been loyal to the Czechoslovak Republic. Before 1938 Brügel was the personal secretary of Ludwig Czech, German Social Democratic leader, who was Minister of Social Justice in the Czechoslovak Cabinet.

from the Czech lands, or from Slovakia, or from Subcarpathian Ruthenia, that we will loyally fulfill our state duties toward all...."

Dr. Benes clearly saw the danger for Czechoslovakia, if her government abroad should fail to insist on the status of 1938. Speaking of the importance of the State Council which is supposed to unite representatives of all peoples of the republic, he pointed out in his second message (12th of November 1941):

> "Otherwise, this would mean that we abandon our citizens and thereby endanger our territory which we had to give up at Munich."

There was no wavering in the determination not to commit himself to anything which could be interpreted as anticipating the decision of the people at home, even in the third message to the State Council (12th of November 1942):

> "With respect to our future internal post-war arrangements, I can only emphasize again that we do not consider ourselves entitled to make any fundamental binding decisions here....Our people at home are completely united. This means all the Czechs, the vast majority of the Slovaks and Carpatho-Russians, and many Germans....I said last year that the same principles apply to our Germans in this war as apply to our other citizens."

There was only one differentiation: the loyalty to the State and not the mother-tongue. The first deviation from this principle can be found in the fourth message (3rd of February 1944). Those Germans and Hungarians have nothing to fear (sic!) "who were with us from the beginning and are with us now", whereas Czechs and Slovaks can find pardon who "have been forced by difficult circumstances and without their own guilt to reckon with the regime in one way or another". This sentence is omitted from the official translation of the speech. The above quoted declarations are addressed not only to Czechoslovaks at home but to the Allies and the Allied Governments too. The last quotation announcing a fundamentally changed attitude was concealed from the Allies.

## II. Approved by the Czech people?

We have seen that all proposals to transfer Czechoslovak citizens from Czechoslovak soil are in contradiction with the often repeated and binding promise not to make any fundamental decision in exile. But we are told sometimes that the government can be sure of the full approval of the Czech people who have asked in underground messages for even harsher measures, i.e. the removal of all German-speaking inhabitants of the country, not allowing even the democratic elements among them to stay in their homeland. It would be only a natural reaction in view of the atrocities committed by Germans and to a large degree by Sudeten Germans if the Czech people should ask for a complete removal of Germans, new intruders and old inhabitants. But everybody knows that emotional reactions can never be taken as a basis for political actions. There are very scanty possibilities for communicating with the outside world today, and the views of those who by chance can contact the government-in-exile are by no means representative of the millions who cannot. A truly democratic decision cannot be taken by underground messages coming from senders living in a comprehensible state of excitement. Only after the liberation of the country can the people be asked about their view in such an important matter. And we rather doubt the democratic character of a referendum leaving only the choice of answering "Yes" or "No" to a preconceived proposal. The answer even to such a question would be very different according to the wording of the question. To ask the Czech people "Do you want to get rid of the Germans?" promises a higher percentage of affirmative answers than to put the question in another way, say, "Would you favor the economic ruin of our country?" or "Are you in favor of the lowering of our standard of life?" All those three questions say in essence the same, as we shall show later on. But a democratic decision can be reached only if the pros and cons can be freely discussed beforehand and if the electors can be freely informed about all aspects of the problem.

### III. Approved by democratic Germans?

Nowadays one can hear quite often that the transfer of, say, two millions of Germans from Czechoslovakia need not bother anybody since even the German democratic refugees from Czechoslovakia, now living in England, are said to be in favor of such a step. The argument is misleading. Nobody regards all the M.P.s who voted recently for the government after Mr. Churchill's speech on Greece, as being in favor of the steps taken by General Scobie. They were only of the opinion that criticism of the government in a single question does not justify a vote of non-confidence. Just the same applies to our matter. The representatives of the German anti-Nazi groups in England are told time and again that the transfer is an already decided matter, decided by the major Allies, and that their silence or their disapproval cannot alter anything. But they are told that their approval would be appreciated and could strengthen the position of these groups in postwar Czechoslovakia. Therefore such declarations cannot be taken at face value. In this case even the notoriously rigid party discipline among the German Communists did not prove water-tight. There are heated discussions and many conflicts among the party-followers regarding this matter. Many old party members declare quite outspokenly that they do not intend to return home if they are supposed to help with the expulsion of their relatives, their brothers and sisters, parents or children. But the German Communists count on the help of their Czech comrades to mitigate the worst consequences. No such hope exists for German Social Democrats or Liberals. There is no question of a real approval or the more [I.e., still less] of a wholehearted support of transfer plans by democratic Germans from Czechoslovakia.

### IV. Germans or Nazis?

There is still more confusion about the personal extent of the measures prepared by the Czechoslovak Government. There can't be and won't be any wholesale expulsion of all Germans from the country, and this simple fact upsets in reality all the hopes and expectations of Czech patriots that future Czechoslovakia will be free from any German influence. Czechoslovakia could be a national state of Czechs, Slovaks and Carpatho-Ukrainians if all Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Jews (in the national, not in the religious sense), could be removed from the country and if the country could refuse to enter into any trade or business relations with Germany or Austria. But this is clearly impossible: national aspirations can never overcome the undeniable facts of geography and economy.

It would be suicide to sever entirely the economic ties with Germany or Austria, only in order to shut the door to anything German. Those facts may not be very popular to-day. A glance at the statistics reflecting the share of some states in Czechoslovakia's foreign trade (export and import) shows us everything:

| | 1929 | 1931 | 1933 | 1935 | 1937 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Germany | 22.17% | 21.40% | 18.71% | 16.48% | 14.56% |
| Austria | 11.46% | 10.61% | 8.46% | 7.51% | 5.81% |
| Great Britain | 5.53% | 5.17% | 5.31% | 6.46% | 7.55% |
| United States | 6.33% | 5.17% | 7.40% | 7.17% | 9.03% |
| Soviet Union | 1.27% | 3.07% | 1.58% | 1.26% | 0.95% |

(The decline in the share of Germany after 1933 is due to Hitler's policy of autarchy.)

Responsible Czech circles refused wisely from the beginning plans of evacuating all the Germans. It is a too well known fact in the whole world how courageously many thousands of anti-fascist Germans stood in 1938 along with Czechs, ready to shed their blood for their homeland against the assault prepared by Hitler. These facts have been stressed repeatedly by Dr. Ripka in his documentary book Munich: Before and After. And the same applies to the Czechoslovak struggle abroad. The Czechoslovak army formed first in France and then in England would not have reached any numerical significance - aside from all other aspects - without the active help rendered right from the beginning by innumerable German democrats, many of them unable to understand the commands in Czech. Therefore in the beginning in Southern France all the commands had to be given in Czech, German and French. Three Czechoslovak soldiers were decorated for bravery in France (1940), two of them being German Social Democrats. One of the first Czechoslovak soldiers who fell in France in 1944 was a German Social Democrat, Dr. Josef Doppler, the spokesman of the democratic students at the Prague German University. Any attempt at a wholesale expulsion policy would therefore meet with disapproval among the Czechs themselves and would consequently lower the respect the Czechs enjoy within the free world.

But this does not mean that the Government intends to expel only the active Nazis from Czechoslovakia. Nobody could deny the Czechs the right to eliminate from the territory of the State everybody involved in or directly guilty of the indescribable Nazi atrocities, murders, etc., on Czechoslovak soil. Nobody can reasonably expect that after this war the various Sturmbannführer and SS-Scharführer will enjoy the privileges of Czechoslovak citizenship and the advantages of a democratic life. It is often stated, mainly in order to arouse some sympathy among German democrats for these plans, that nothing will be done beyond the removal of everything reminding of Nazism or Fascism from Czechoslovak soil. But the real state of affairs is different.

What is really intended is a combination of the two above-mentioned paragraphs: to remove not only the active Nazis - not to speak of the criminal elements - but the bulk of the German population, with the exception of the small number of proved democrats. The Germans, i.e., the broad masses of the population neither pro-Nazi nor anti-Nazi, should be removed because there are too many to be "digested" by future Czechoslovakia. They will not be removed simply as Germans and not as Nazis, they will be expelled because they are Germans and therefore liable to become Nazis! Dr. Ripka, today the chief protagonist of this policy, held a very different opinion on the same matter in writing his book Munich: Before and After: (p. 21) "It was known that only a minority were active in the support of Pan-German National Socialism, while the majority, carried along with the stream, were merely being made use of...."

It may be that those first-hand impressions have faded away from memory after so many years in exile, deprived of the possibility of being in touch with developments and events on the spot. But never can even the worst experiences permit a deviation from the principles of personal instead of collective responsibility happily formulated by the Czechoslovak Minister of Justice, Dr. J. Stransky. Dealing with the first Allied declaration regarding war crimes, Stransky said (New Commonwealth Quarterly, April 1942):

> "The declaration...rejects the doctrine of collective responsibility which is characteristic of Nazism. It shares Edmund Burke's belief that it is impossible to draw an indictment against a whole nation. The Allies will adhere to the principle of personal responsibility as stressed by President Roosevelt in his statement of 25th of October 1941....Civilized peoples long ago adopted the basic principle that no man should be punished for the deed of another."

The theory rejected by civilized people -- that a person can be or even should be punished for the deeds of another, is developed in a rather curious way in the proposals of the Czechoslovak Government. People should be punished by forcible removal from their home for no other guilt than that they are supposed to be liable to crimes committed hitherto only by others! And the most grotesque conclusion of all: somebody should be punished for no other reason but that far too many of his co-nationals have lived for generations in the country! In his memoirs, President Masaryk gave the following advice to the Germans of Czechoslovakia:

> "Beurteilt man die Sache ruhig und realistisch, so liegt es im Interesse der Deutschen selbst, dass ihrer bei uns mehr als weniger sind. Angenommen wir träten eine bis eineinhalb und sogar zwei Millionen ab; die bleibende Million müsste für ihr nationales Dasein unverhältnismässig mehr Befürchtungen hegen, als 3 Millionen die Tschechisierung zu furchten brauchen."

(Die Weltrevolution, P. 461)

/"Considering the problem realistically and calmly, it appears that it is in the interest of the Germans themselves to be in larger rather than in smaller numbers on our territory. Should 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 Germans be removed from the country, the remaining 1,000,000 would have to fear for their national existence much more than 3,000,000 Germans would have to fear Czechization."

(The World Revolution p. 461)7

Whereas Dr. Ripka told the democratic Germans from Czechoslovakia on the 8th of October 1944 that it would be in *their* interest that post-war Czechoslovakia should comprise within her borders rather fewer Germans than more!

V. Security before economic considerations?

In considering the transfer question, all economic arguments should be left in abeyance, we are told every time we draw the attention of interested persons to this or that undeniable fact. Dr. Ripka put it in a nutshell by saying: we subordinate all economic considerations to the demands of security.

This sounds very convincing and really, who would dare after the awful experiences of the last years to minimize the demands for security against a new aggression? But this theory is a bit less persuasive if we try to define the term "security." The degree of security is higher if the economic foundations of the state in question are sound. The security of the state is jeopardized if it is a hotbed of unemployment, economic unrest and poverty. This is such a basic truth that we need not enter into details. The question of the well-being of the population is not just a matter of social welfare, but an elementary pre-condition for the security of the state as a whole. He who intentionally neglects economic considerations imperils the inner and outer security of his state even if this neglect is camouflaged by patriotic slogans.

VI. Can Czechoslovakia afford all this?

In dealing with the economic aspect of the transfer plans we have arrived at the crux of the matter. Up to the present we have not heard from the supporters of these plans any answer which meets the point when we produce some figures about the economic side of the problem. One must be a very careful observer to discover any reply at all, although the whole matter touches on the roots of Czechoslovakia's existence as an independent state. One can only hear whispered two kinds of arguments:

a. Russia will help us.

b. We shall tighten our belts.

a. No question arises about the determination of the Soviet Union to get in the closest commercial connections with postwar Czechoslovakia, and surely this will help Czechoslovakia avoid some troubles. But it must be borne in mind that before 1938 the economic ties between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union were comparatively insignificant for both parties, although there was only good will on both sides. Even after the conclusion of the Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty in 1935, Czechoslovak exports to Russia decreased for a certain time. Political sympathies are not sufficient to overcome the enormous difficulties of a numerically important exchange of goods, raw materials, etc. Even doubling and trebling the Soviet share in Czechoslovakia's foreign trade will not mean very much - besides the fact that the Russian orders can be carried out only if Czechoslovakia's factories are fully manned. But the transfer plans of the Government can only result in depriving Czechoslovak factories of the necessary manpower.

b. Czechoslovakia will have "to tighten its belt" anyhow, even without transfer, as a natural consequence of the turmoil of war, occupation and revolution. To tighten its belt even more does not seem possible for a state with a comparatively low standard of life. The average annual income of a gainfully employed person in Czechoslovakia before the war was 455 international units (gold-dollars), in Austria 511, in Germany 646, in the United Kingdom 1069 and in the USA 1383.

(Colin Clark, The Conditions of Economic Progress.) Only politicians who do not know the difficult working conditions in their country from their own experience could utter irresponsible slogans about "tightening the belt", not seeing that the carrying out of their plans would not leave even a belt in the country to be tightened.

The real facts are these:

### A. The Economic Significance of the Germans.

The Germans of Czechoslovakia are no backward peasants without economic significance for the country. No political or emotional argument - however comprehensible - can blot out the fact that they are economically the most important part of the population. Theories that Czechoslovakia is the living space of Czechs and Slovaks, so that no other nationals can be retained in dominant positions, are - besides the smell of Nazism connected with such arguments - sheer nonsense in view of the experience that no state of Czechs and Slovaks can exist without a non-Czech and non-Slovak population. According to the census of 1930, comparatively more Germans were gainfully occupied than Czechs and Slovaks:

| | Czechs | Germans |
|---|---|---|
| Industry and Trade | 345.8 | 458.8 |
| Commerce and Finance | 68.2 | 88.6 |

Of 1,000 Czechs 434.5 were gainfully occupied in industry and trade, of 1,000 Germans 566.3. If we look for instance at the textile industry we see the following pictures:

| | |
|---|---|
| Czechs and Slovaks employed | 152,644 |
| Germans employed | 187,065 |

In judging these figures it must be borne in mind that in general the numerical relation between Czechs and Slovaks on the one hand and Germans on the other was 3:1 in 1930. The argument that the importance of the consumer-goods industry employing relatively more German workers, has declined in recent years in favor of the capital-goods industry, situated mostly in the predominantly Czech parts of the country, does not pay. For the economic future of Czechoslovakia depends upon the possibility of regenerating the rehabilitating the consumer-goods industries - the traditional export industries - intentionally neglected by the Nazis. The economic importance of the textile industry, for instance, is due to the fact that it exported products to the value of one-third of the whole exports of Czechoslovakia. And export the country must, in view of the necessity to buy the necessary raw materials abroad. (The country possesses practically no wool, cotton, bauxite, copper, nickel, etc.) Any further neglect of the industries situated mainly in the German districts would be disastrous. Even from the point of view of revenues and taxation the picture is the same. It is a well-known fact that the revenue from one German district in Bohemia (Gablonz) in Old Austria was higher than the revenue from the whole Austrian province of Salzburg. There exist statistics showing the share in imports and exports of the different parts of the country, for 1937:

| | Czechoslovakia, Post-Munich territory. | Sudeten German territory. |
|---|---|---|
| Import | 7447 mill. K. | 3533 mill. K. |
| Export | 6848 " " | 5124 " " |
| | -599 " " | (plus) 1591 " " |

We see that the trade-balance of the country was active only due to the fact that the border regions inhabited mostly by Germans belonged to Czechoslovakia. National aspirations find an insurmountable barrier in the basic necessities of a country. To neglect them means to undermine the foundation of the country, and thus to extinguish even the possibilities for a free development of national aspirations in the more limited sense permitted by history, geography, and economy.

### B. The Workers less affected?

It is one of the most frail arguments that things would not be so bad, as Germans workers will be less affected by the transfer plans, in view of their predominantly democratic and socialistic outlook. A worker is no machine. He does not want only to earn his living, he wants to have the possibility for his children to attain a higher social position, he needs doctors, chemists, etc., he has cultural demands which can be fulfilled only in the language he understands. To remove all Germans from the country save some 800,000 means to deprive the remainder of educational facilities for the second and third generation. A nation or a national minority cannot consist of workers only. Otherwise they are condemned to extinction in one or two generations. And this fate is not prepared for Nazi gangsters or politically indifferent persons but it is meant as a special reward for politically conscious anti-Nazi fighters, who even in the hell of the Third Reich remained faithful to the ideals of Czechoslovak democracy! Those highly skilled workers, an asset to the national economy of every country of the world, would be granted a privileged position anywhere else and not the position of just tolerated underlings.

But it is ridiculous to judge this problem merely in a statistical way. To transfer 200 glassworkers or miners is a worse catastrophe for the country than to send away 2,000 or more postmen. To argue "less workers than peasants have been poisoned by Nazism, therefore more workers can stay behind than peasants" means to argue in a vacuum.

Even if democratic tradition has the strongest roots among the German working population it would be foolish to say that no worker is to be found in the ranks of the Nazi party. The economic expert of the Czechoslovak Communists, Ludwig Freund, estimated the percentage of workers to be removed by 40 percent, whereas the German population in general has to lose about 66 percent. There is no doubt about it that the loss of roughly 40 percent of the German working population would be ruinous for the economy of the country.

C. Czechoslovakia - a country with a low birthrate.

In 1930 (the last census) Czechoslovakia had 14.7 millions of inhabitants. The present figure can be estimated by 15.5 millions or or something more. To lose 2,000,000 of them (and perhpas half a million Hungarians) can perhaps be afforded by a country with the possibility of replacing the departing populations in two or three generations, No such possibility exists in Czechoslovakia. The low birthrate in France is notorious. But it is less notorious that things in Czechoslovakia are not much better. If they are a bit better it is only due to the higher fertility in the eastern provinces (Slovakia and Carpatho-Ruthenia). One of the reasons for which the French press rejects territorial aggrandizement of France at Germany's expense is that France could not compete with the Germans in populating the newly acquired territories. For instance, *France libre,* 8th of December 1944:

> "Independamment de toute autre consideration, l'interet francais ne permet pas d'annexer, a moins de refouler les habitants; mais qui peut y songer serieusement quand, faute de naissances, nous peuplons mal notre territoire, aupres d'une Allemagne deja surpeuplee?"
>
> [Independently of all other considerations, the true interest of the French nation does not allow us to annex (German territory), unless we expel its inhabitants; but how can we seriously consider expelling any people when, because of a low birthrate, we do not populate our territory sufficiently, and Germany is already over-populated?]

Never have we heard such serious scruples from responsible Czech circles, although the slogan "nous peuplons mal notre territoire" is fitting for Czechoslovakia, too. The birthrate in France was 15 per 1,000 inhabitants in 1936 (*Statistical Yearbook of the League of Nations*); in the western provinces of Czechoslovakia (Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia) in the same year it was 14.51 (*Statistical Yearbook of the Czechoslovak Republic.*) It was not decisive that the birthrate in Czechoslovakia went up a bit during the war. Decisive is the most alarming decline in the birthrate between 1918 and 1938. This means that the country will face a lack of manpower, growing from year to year, supposing that not even one of the guiltiest Sudeten Germans will be driven out. Experts estimate that Czechoslovakia will be faced at the end of the war with a lack of at least 500,000 people aged 20-45, i.e., in the age-groups with the greatest capacity for work. This state of affairs will be aggravated by war losses, victims of persecution, etc. To aggravate the situation even more by sending away a population extremely important from the point of view of man-power economy would be irresponsible nonsense. It is by no means Czechoslovakia's internal affair if the foundations of her economic balance should be eradicated deliberately by her own government's action. All intentions of the United Nations for securing lasting peace in Central Europe would be jeopardized if not frustrated.

## VII. Conclusion.

We pass over here all other considerations which may also be important, for instance the existence of a hundred thousand mixed marriages, the existence of hundreds of thousands who pose as Czechs if this is more appropriate and pose as Germans if Germany seems to be on the winning side. We pass over the fact that almost every Czech has German relatives and almost every German Czech relatives. We have not dealt with the idea of carrying out large-scale transfer from the country during a time of the greatest difficulties with transport for foodstuffs. We have not dealt with the intention to multiply the difficulties of the occupation authorities in Germany by handing them over additionally two millions of homeless Germans. Our conclusions are:

A. Responsible Czech circles, mainly President Benes, have repeatedly declared themselves unable to commit themselves to anything in the German question here in exile. They must be reminded that they themselves drew public attention to this fact. There is no possibility of checking up on the opinion of the Czech people now. Decisions must be postponed until after the war.

B. The removal of a large number of Germans from the country without the faintest possibility of replacing them would be a tremendous economic catastrophe for the country, from which no recovery in a near or later future seems to be possible.

C. The idea that the Czechs ever could "get rid of the Germans" is a really naive one. To fight a danger by removing it bodily is sheer escapism, if admittedly Germans remain in the country and if the country remains on the borders of Germany and Austria. It must be said with due allowance for emotional reactions from the Czech side that it is the -- perhaps deplorable -- fate of the Czechs to live beside the Germans and with the Germans in one country. There is no escape from this fact which of course is no pleasant one for the Czechs. Besides the elimination of all guilty persons in the widest sense there should be quite another postwar task just for Czechoslovakia: to help in the re-education of the German people by re-educating their own Germans in a democratic way.

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